

JAMES PATTERSON

MAX RIDE


FIRST FLIGHT




BENNETT
SANCHEZ
SANZ

MARVEL

002



THE SMELL
OF GUN
SMOKE CUTS
THROUGH
THE AIR AS
THE SPENT
CASING FALLS
TO THE
GROUND.



I CAN FEEL
THE RUSH OF
ADRENALINE
IN MY VEINS,
MAKING
ME DIZZY,
FEATHER-LIGHT.



THE TASTE
OF MY
BLOOD FILLS
MY MOUTH.
STINGING
HOT AND
TANG LIKE
COPPER.



I CAN
HEAR THE
DRUMBEAT
OF THEIR
SHOES
ON THE
PAVEMENT
FARTHER
AND
FAINTER
AND AWAY...



BUT
ALL I
SEE...

...IS
DARKNESS.



JAMES PATTERSON

MAX RIDE

F I R S T F L I G H T



MAXIMUM RIDE doesn't know much about her past.

She remembers the **LAB** where she was given wings and the ability to fly, the **SCIENTISTS** who experimented on her, and the **ERASERS**--half-human, half-wolf monsters--who kept her prisoner. Most of all she remembers **JEB**, the man who helped her and her friends--Fang, Nudge, Iggy, Gasman, and Angel--escape, taught them how to blend in and ultimately gave his life to protect them.

Recently, the Erasers and their leader, Ari, ambushed **THE FLOCK** and kidnapped Angel. On their way to rescue their friend, the group stopped to rest. While searching for food, Max heroically stood up for a girl being attacked by a gang of bullies, not knowing one of them had a gun.

MARGUERITE BENNETT
WRITER

ALEX SANCHEZ
ARTIST

ESTHER SANZ
COLORIST

VC'S TRAVIS LANHAM
LETTERER

YASMINE PUTRI
COVER

PRODUCTION JESSICA PIZARRO
EDITOR IN CHIEF ALEX ALONSO

ASSISTANT EDITOR CHARLES BEACHAM
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER JOE QUESADA

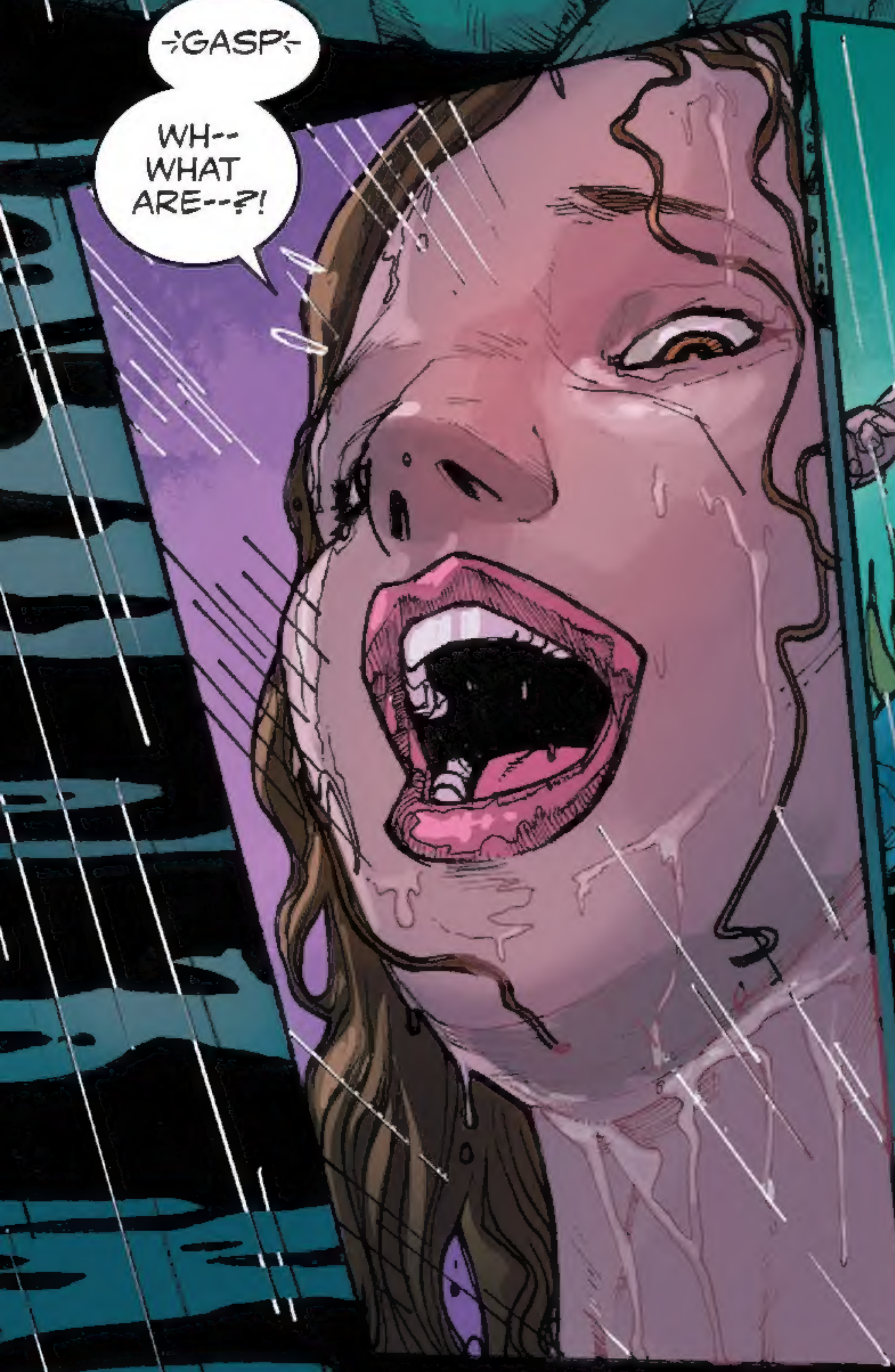
EDITOR SANA AMANAT
PUBLISHER DAN BUCKLEY



→KOFF→
→HCK→



WHERE
ARE YOU--?



→GASP→

WH--
WHAT
ARE--?!



IT'S
OKAY... I-I'VE
GOT YOU.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

THANKS FOR TAKING FIRST WATCH, GUYS.

NO PROBLEM, IGGY. AND DON'T WORRY, GUYS, IT'S GONNA BE OKAY.

FANG, YOU'RE MY FRIEND. YOU'RE FUNNY, YOU'RE BRAVE, AND IT'S CUTE HOW YOU THINK PIZZA IS A FOOD GROUP.

BUT FOR THE THIRTY-THOUSANDTH TIME, YOU DON'T NEED TO REASSURE US IF ALL YOU'RE REALLY DOING IS REASSURING YOURSELF.

I DO LOVE THESE BACKHANDED COMPLIMENTS OF YOURS, NUDGE.

IT'S JUST-- MAX HAS BEEN GONE HALF A DAY. IT'S ALMOST DAWN, GEEZ--

DON'T CUSS. SAY "PEAS AND RICE."

ANGEL WOULD SCOLD YOU FOR SWEARING.

YEAH, WELL--

I AM NOT SAYING "PEAS AND RICE." YOUR GLUTEN-FREE AGENDA HAS NO PLACE HERE.

WERE YOU GONNA SAY "ANGEL ISN'T HERE"?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

DONT. I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...



...FIRST
JEB, THEN
ANGEL, NOW
MAX.

BUT
IT'S NOT
LIKE THAT,
FANG.

JEB RAISED
US, JEB RESCUED
US, JEB FREED US,
AND JEB DIED.

BUT
WE'RE GOING TO
GET ANGEL BACK.
AND MAX IS A
SURVIVOR.

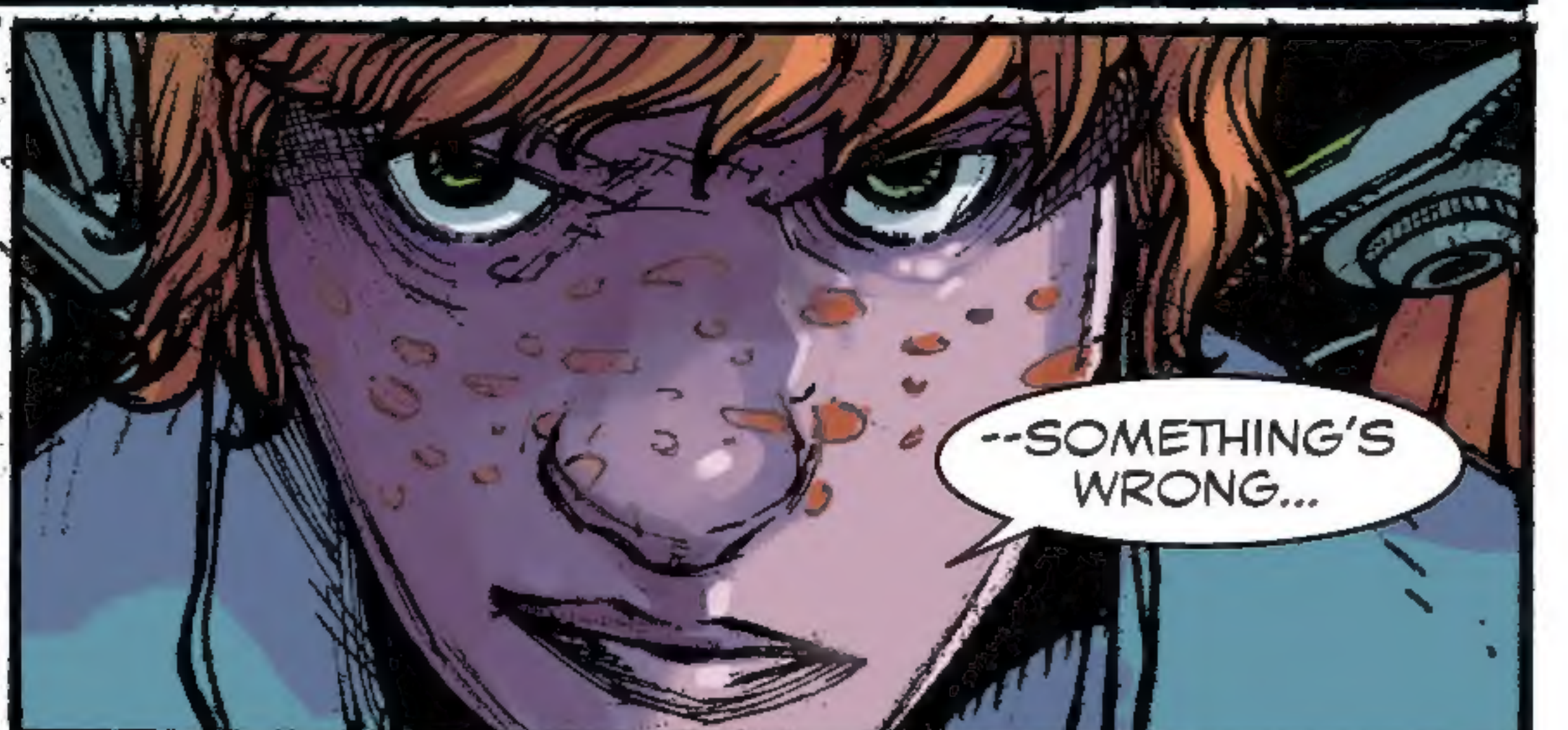
I
TRUST
HER.



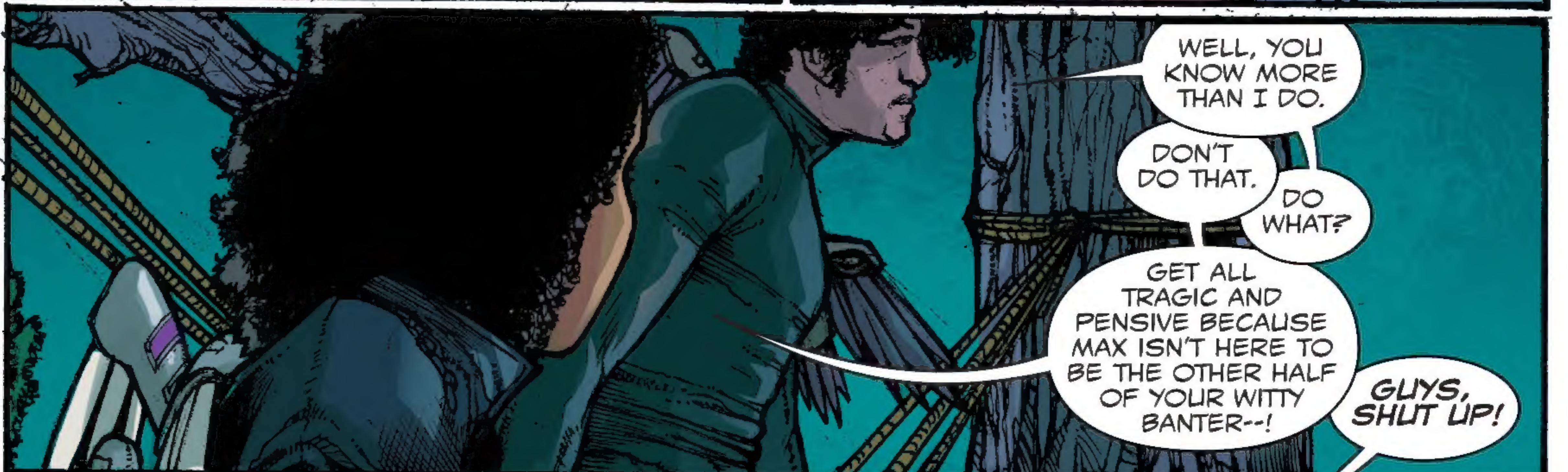
I TRUST
US.

GAH...WHY
WON'T THEY KEEP
IT DOWN? SOME
OF US ARE TRYING
TO...SLEEP--

AND I
TRUST YOU,
FANG.



--SOMETHING'S
WRONG...



WELL, YOU
KNOW MORE
THAN I DO.

DON'T
DO THAT.

DO
WHAT?

GET ALL
TRAGIC AND
PENSIVE BECAUSE
MAX ISN'T HERE TO
BE THE OTHER HALF
OF YOUR WITTY
BANTER--!

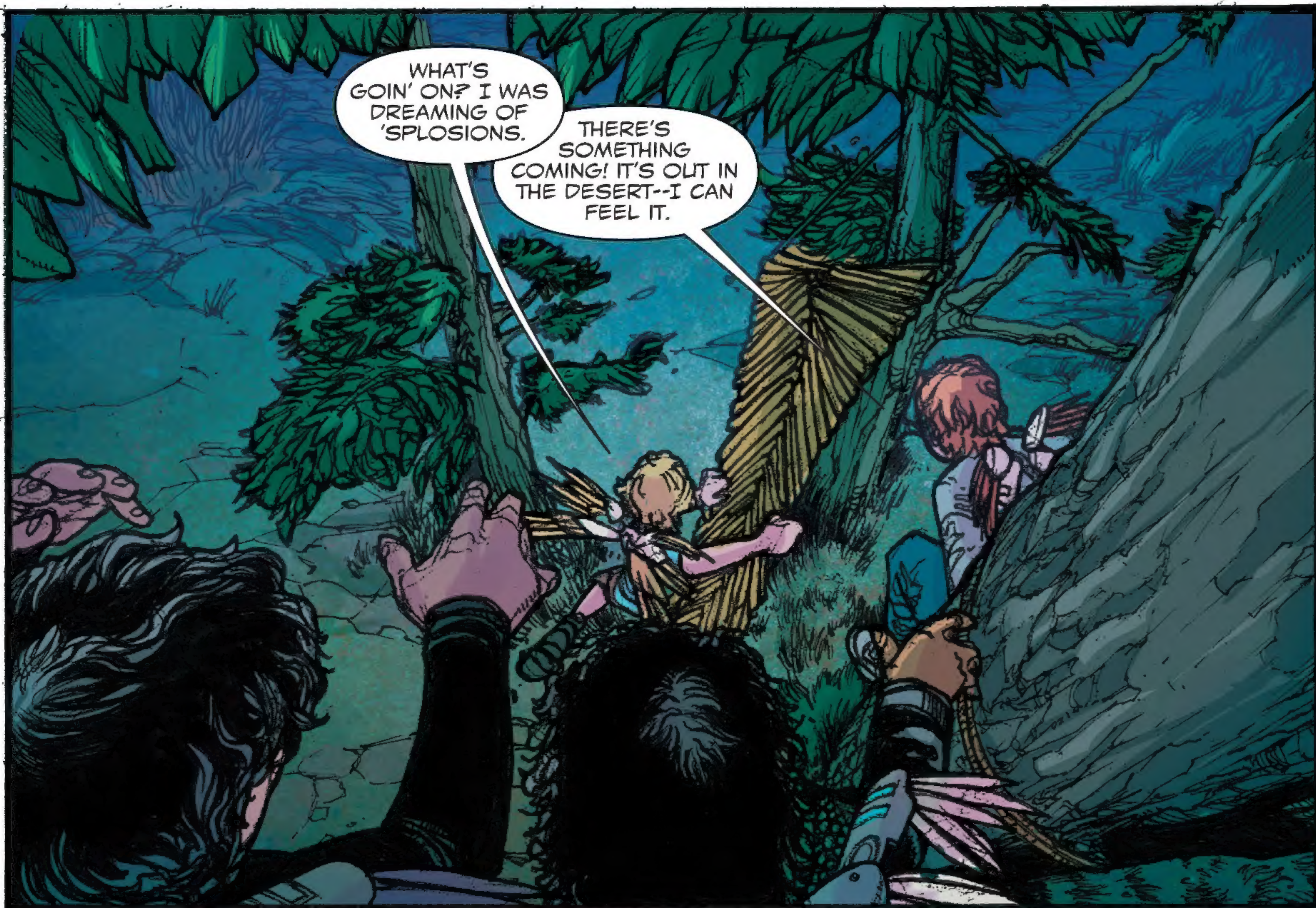
GUYS,
SHUT UP!



WHAT'S
YOUR DEAL,
IGGY?

SORRY
TO INTERRUPT
YOUR TENDER
MOMENT, BUT
SOMETHING'S...

DO
YOU HEAR
THAT?

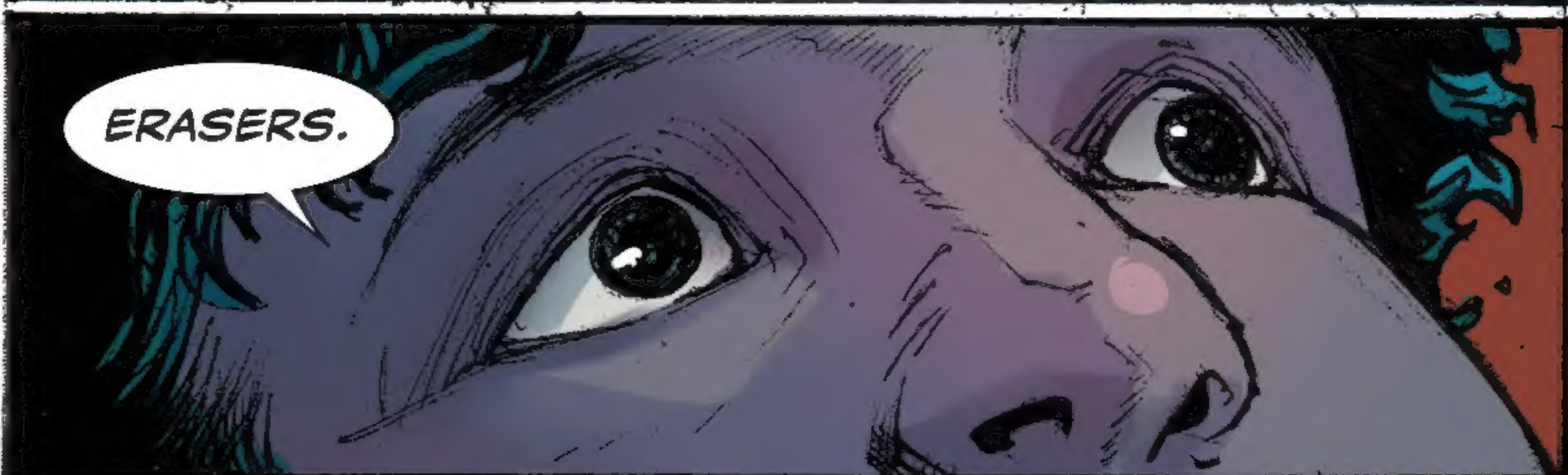
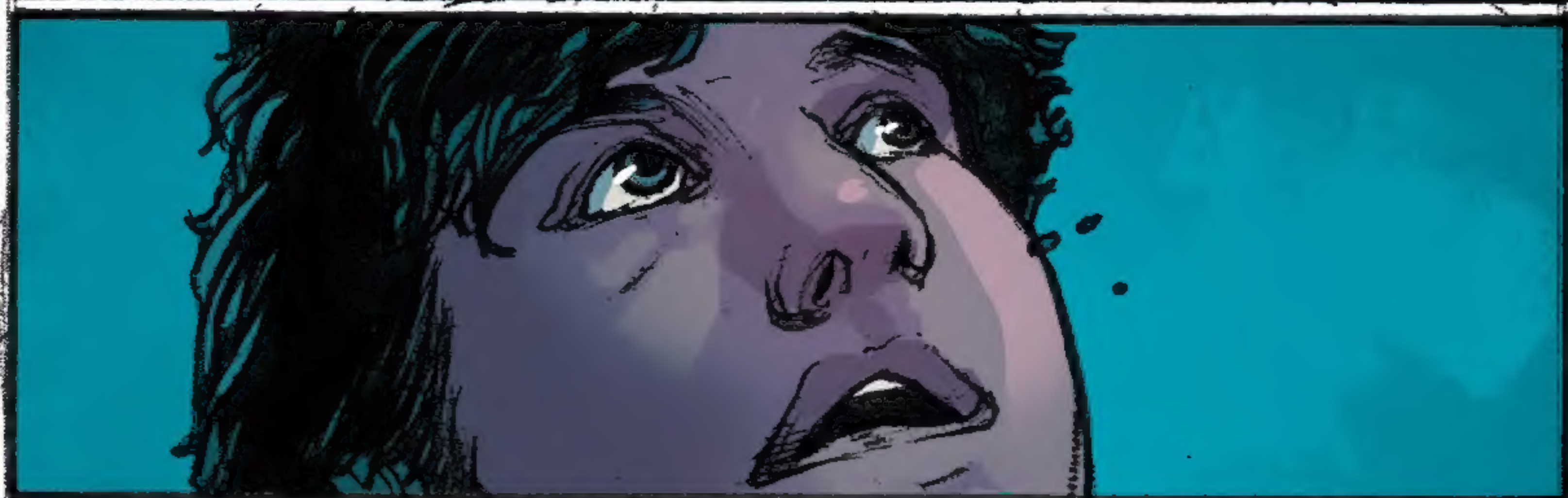
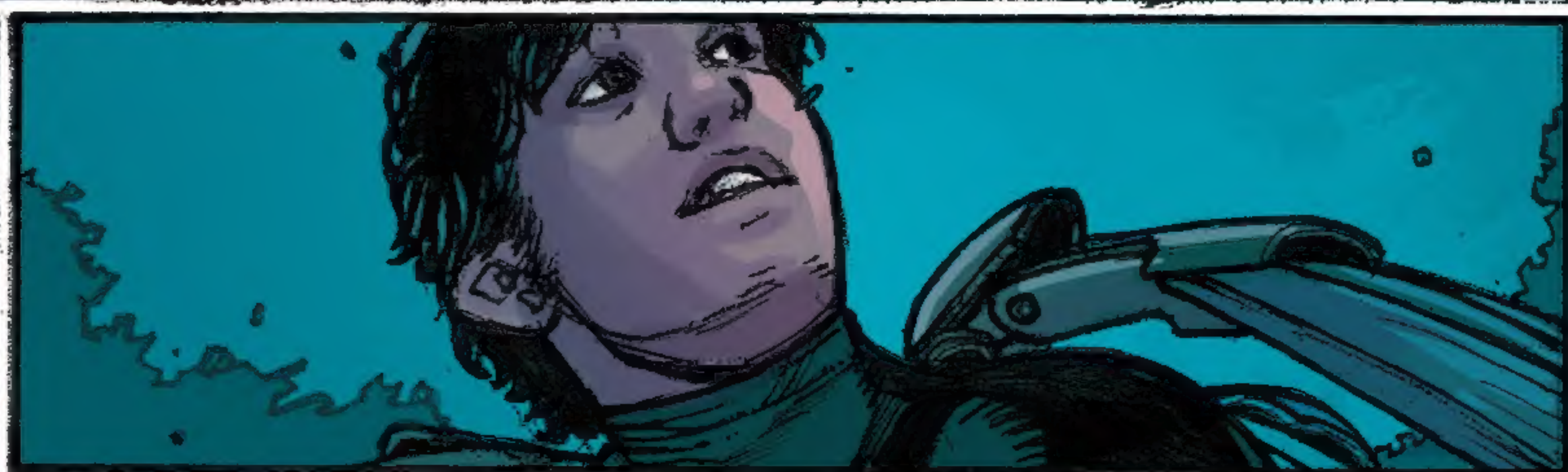


WHAT'S
GOIN' ON? I WAS
DREAMING OF
'SPLOSIONS.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
COMING! IT'S OUT IN
THE DESERT--I CAN
FEEL IT.



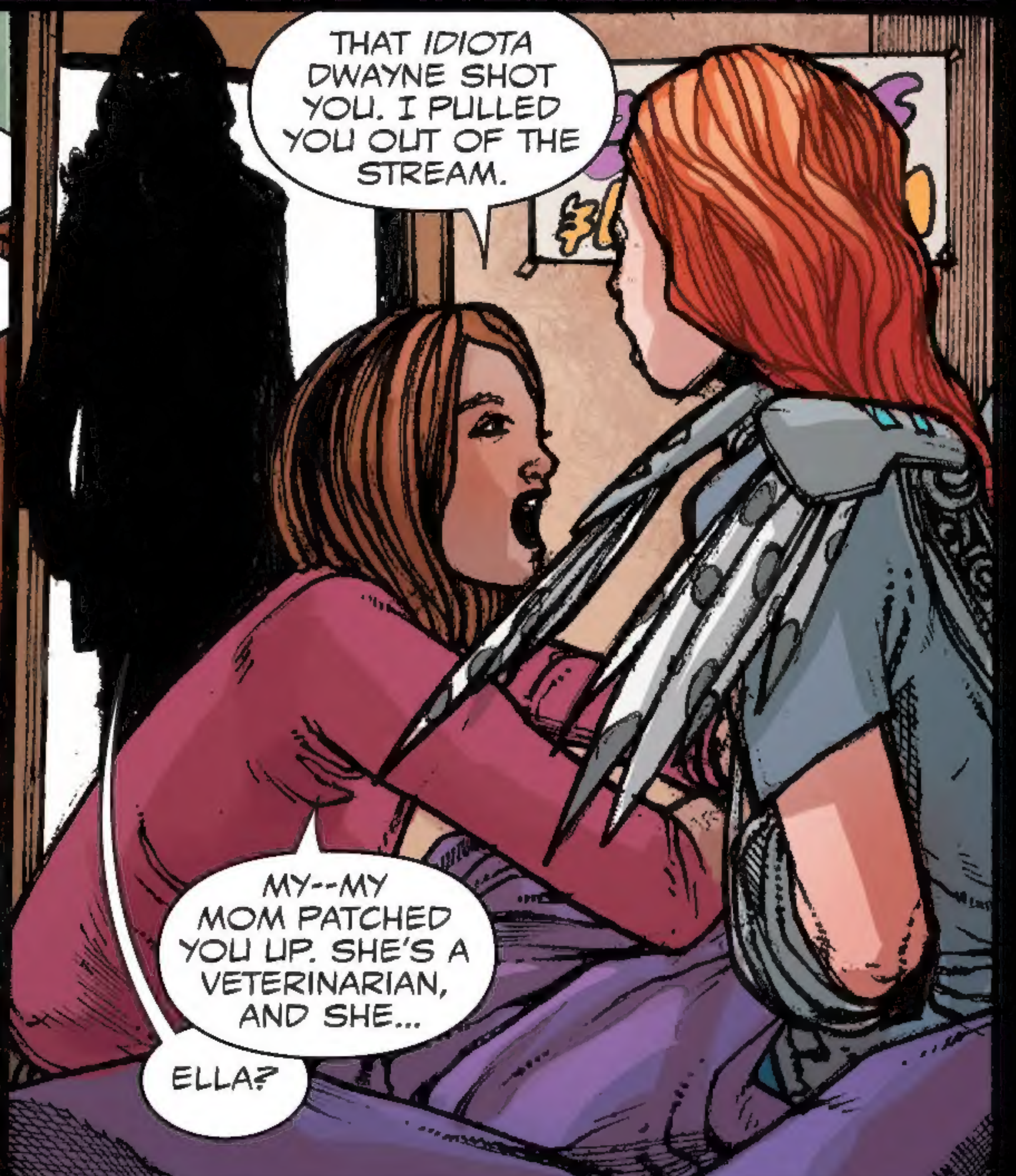
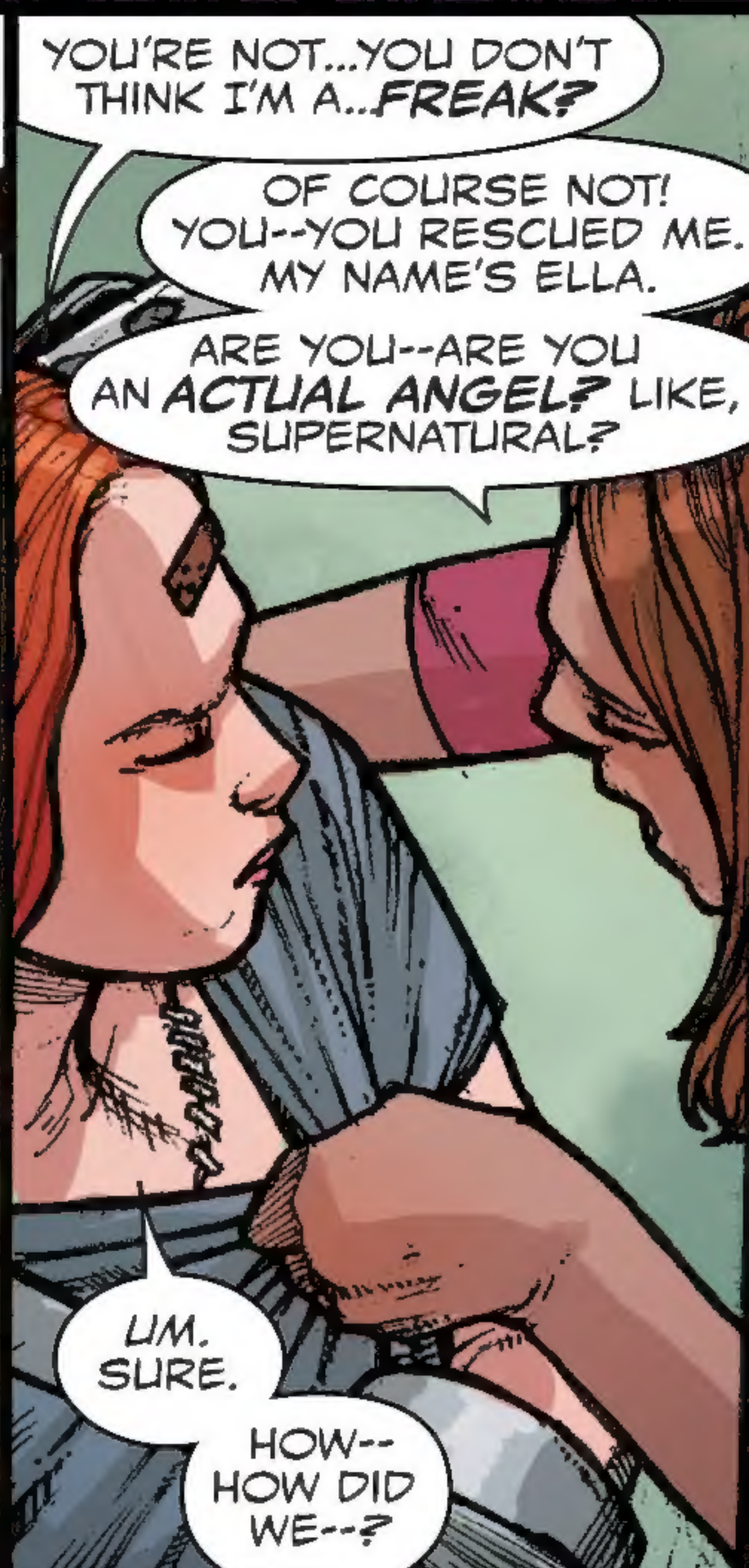
I CAN
HEAR...
GROWLING...
PAWS ON
HARD-
PACKED
EARTH--



ERASERS.



PEAS
AND
RICE.



A MOM.

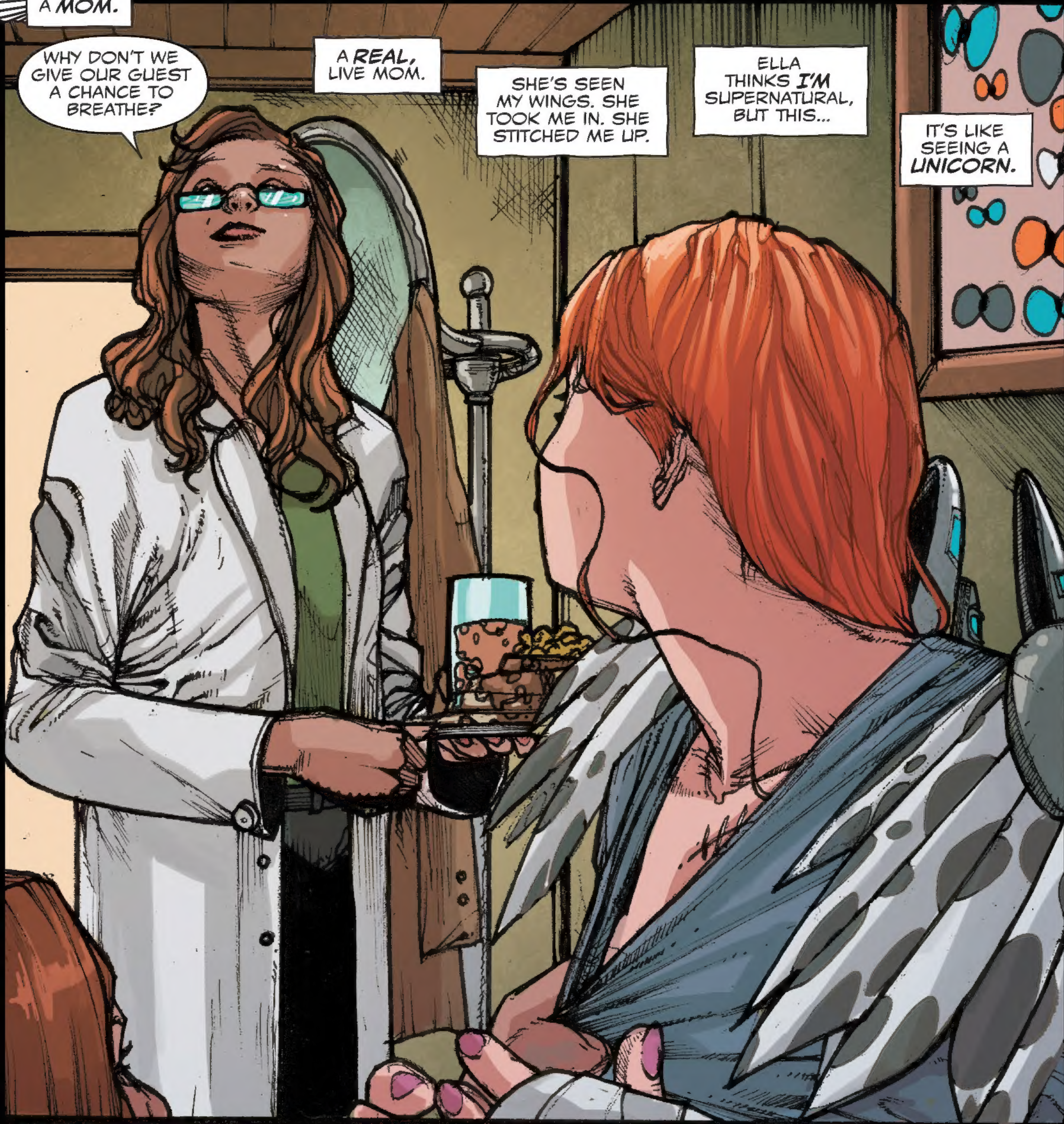
WHY DON'T WE
GIVE OUR GUEST
A CHANCE TO
BREATHE?

A REAL,
LIVE MOM.

SHE'S SEEN
MY WINGS. SHE
TOOK ME IN. SHE
STITCHED ME UP.

ELLA
THINKS I'M
SUPERNATURAL,
BUT THIS...

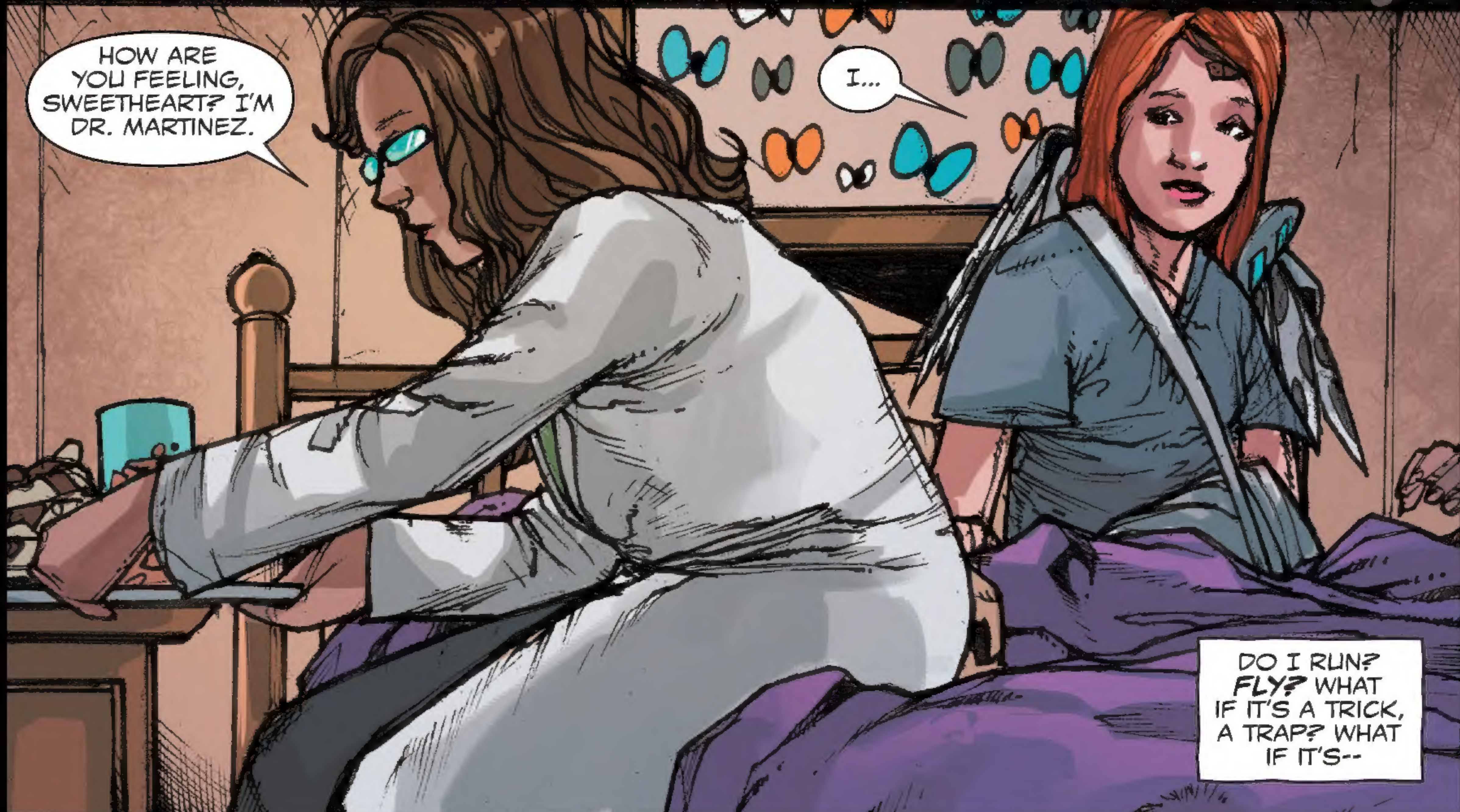
IT'S LIKE
SEEING A
UNICORN.

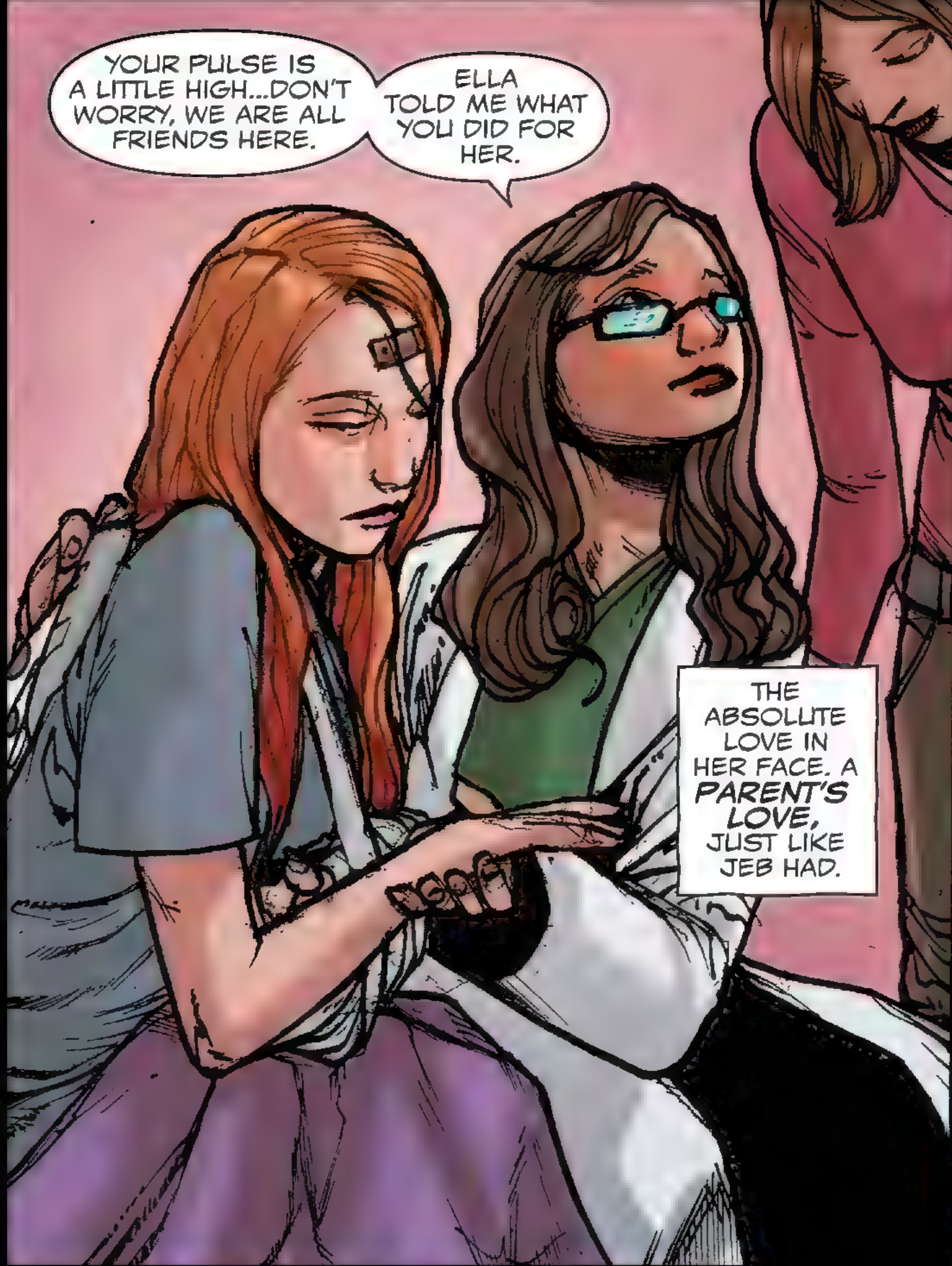


HOW ARE
YOU FEELING,
SWEETHEART? I'M
DR. MARTINEZ.

I...

DO I RUN?
FLY? WHAT
IF IT'S A TRICK,
A TRAP? WHAT
IF IT'S--






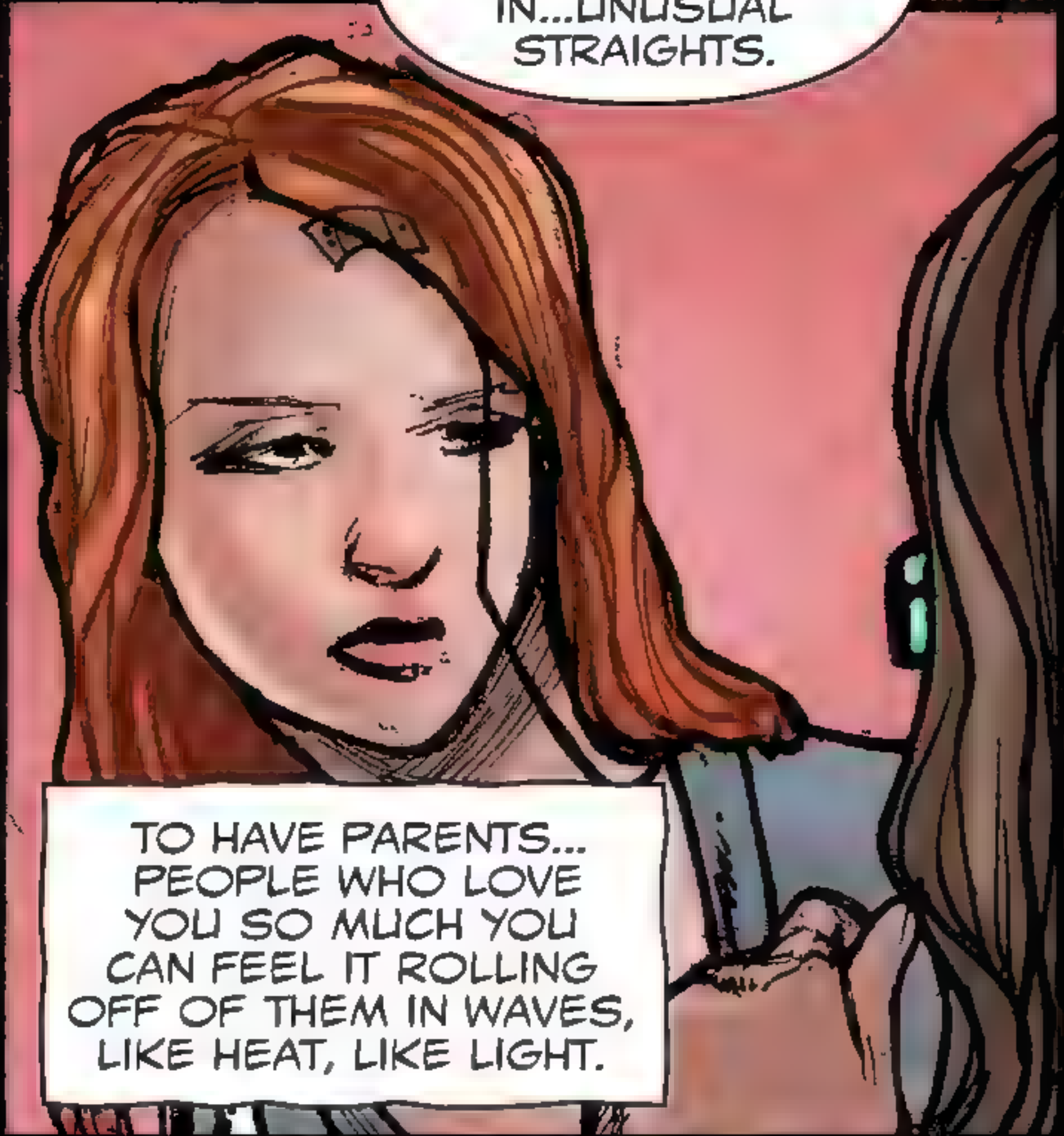
YOUR PULSE IS
A LITTLE HIGH...DON'T
WORRY, WE ARE ALL
FRIENDS HERE.

ELLA
TOLD ME WHAT
YOU DID FOR
HER.

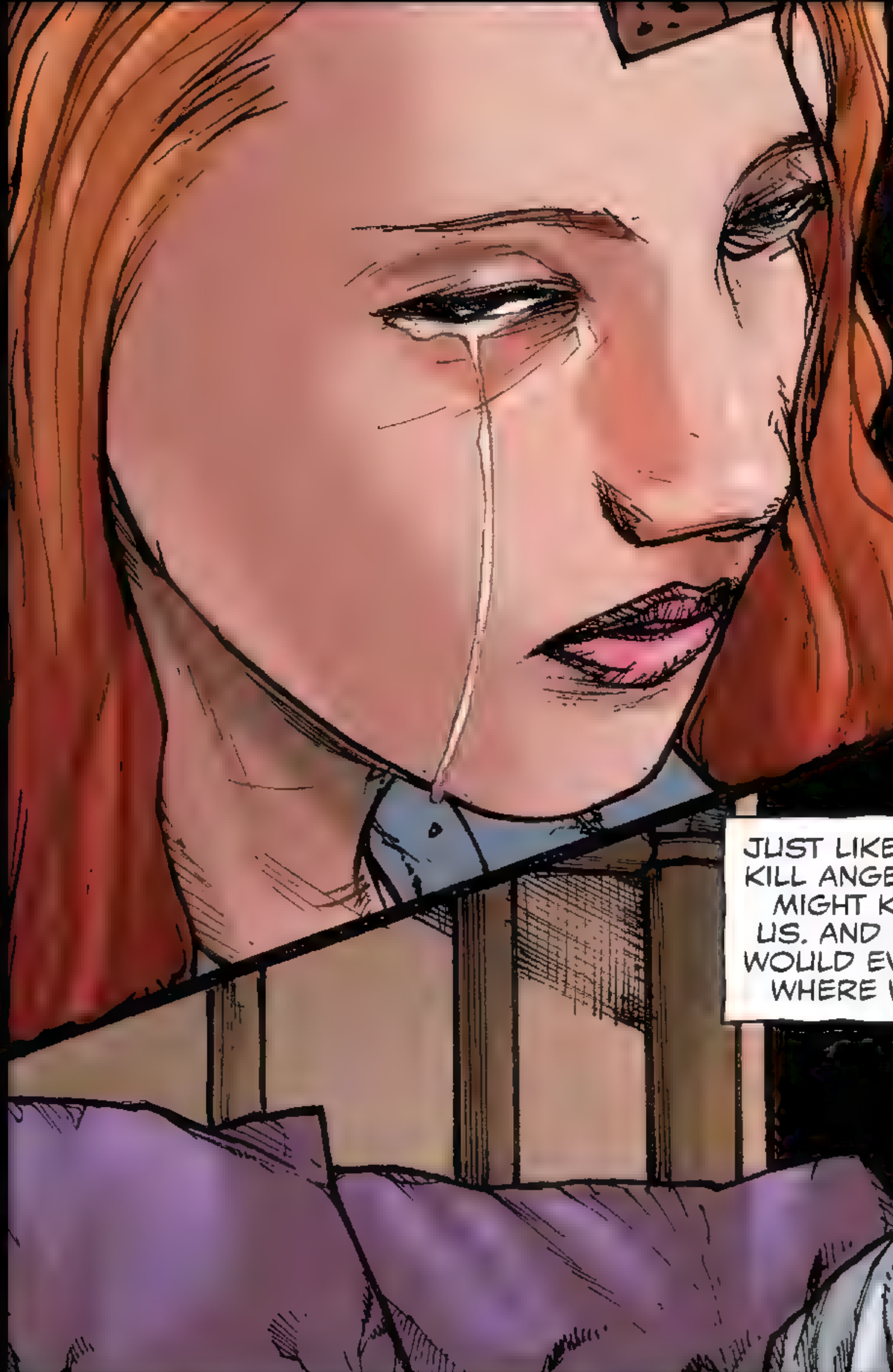
THE
ABSOLITE
LOVE IN
HER FACE. A
**PARENT'S
LOVE,**
JUST LIKE
JEB HAD.



WITH YOUR, AH...
MODIFICATIONS,
I CAN SEE YOU ARE
IN...UNUSUAL
STRAIGHTS.



TO HAVE PARENTS...
PEOPLE WHO LOVE
YOU SO MUCH YOU
CAN FEEL IT ROLLING
OFF OF THEM IN WAVES,
LIKE HEAT, LIKE LIGHT.



WE WON'T ASK
YOU ANY QUESTIONS. YOU HAVE
DONE SO MUCH FOR US ALREADY.
PLEASE, IF THERE'S ANYTHING
WE CAN DO TO REPAY
YOU...

I NEVER HAD THAT. NONE OF US
DID. JEB LOVED US LIKE A FATHER...
AND THE ERASERS KILLED HIM.

JUST LIKE THEY MIGHT
KILL ANGEL. LIKE THEY
MIGHT KILL ALL OF
US. AND NO MOTHER
WOULD EVER WONDER
WHERE WE'D GONE.



LET IT OUT,
SWEETHEART.

IT'S
GOING TO
BE OKAY.



STOP SAYING THAT!

IT IS NOT GOING TO BE OKAY! NOT UNLESS WE DO SOMETHING!

WHAT CAN WE DO?! THEY TOOK ANGEL, DESTROYED OUR HOUSE! MAX ISN'T EVEN HERE.

SHE MIGHT BE WOUNDED-- SHE MIGHT BE DEAD!



DON'T SAY THAT! MAX IS FINE.

THE ERASERS AREN'T HERE YET SO WE'VE GOT TIME. WE NEED TO STAY PUT SO MAX CAN FIND US.



WELL IF WE'RE STAYING HERE WE NEED A PLAN.

WE NEED TO HIDE, BUT WE HAVE TO BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SIGNAL MAX ON SIGHT.

US OR THE ERASERS. ONE'S GOTTA MAKE LIKE A BIRD AND FLOCK OFF.



FANG, I SWEAR. I NEVER THOUGHT ONE OF YOUR STUPID PUNS WOULD ACTUALLY BE HELPFUL--

...IGGY?

I'VE GOT A PLAN.



SCENT IS SWEET.

SCENT IS CLOSE.



FRESH MEAT.

YOU CAN'T RUN FOREVER, LITTLE PIG!

YOU CAN RUN, BUT YOU CAN'T--

SNAP

NUDGE,
IGGY, THAT WAS
KILLER!

AHH!

FLY.

ARRROOOO!

POOR
CHOICE OF
WORDS,
FANG.

LET
ME GO, ARI,
YOU WALKING
THROW RUG!!





THE STITCHES CAN COME OUT, I THINK. ONLY HALF A DAY OLD, BUT THE WOUND IS CLOSED.

I MIGHT HEAL QUICK, BUT MY SHOULDER'S STILL REALLY BANGED UP...IT'LL BE HOURS BEFORE I CAN FLY AGAIN.

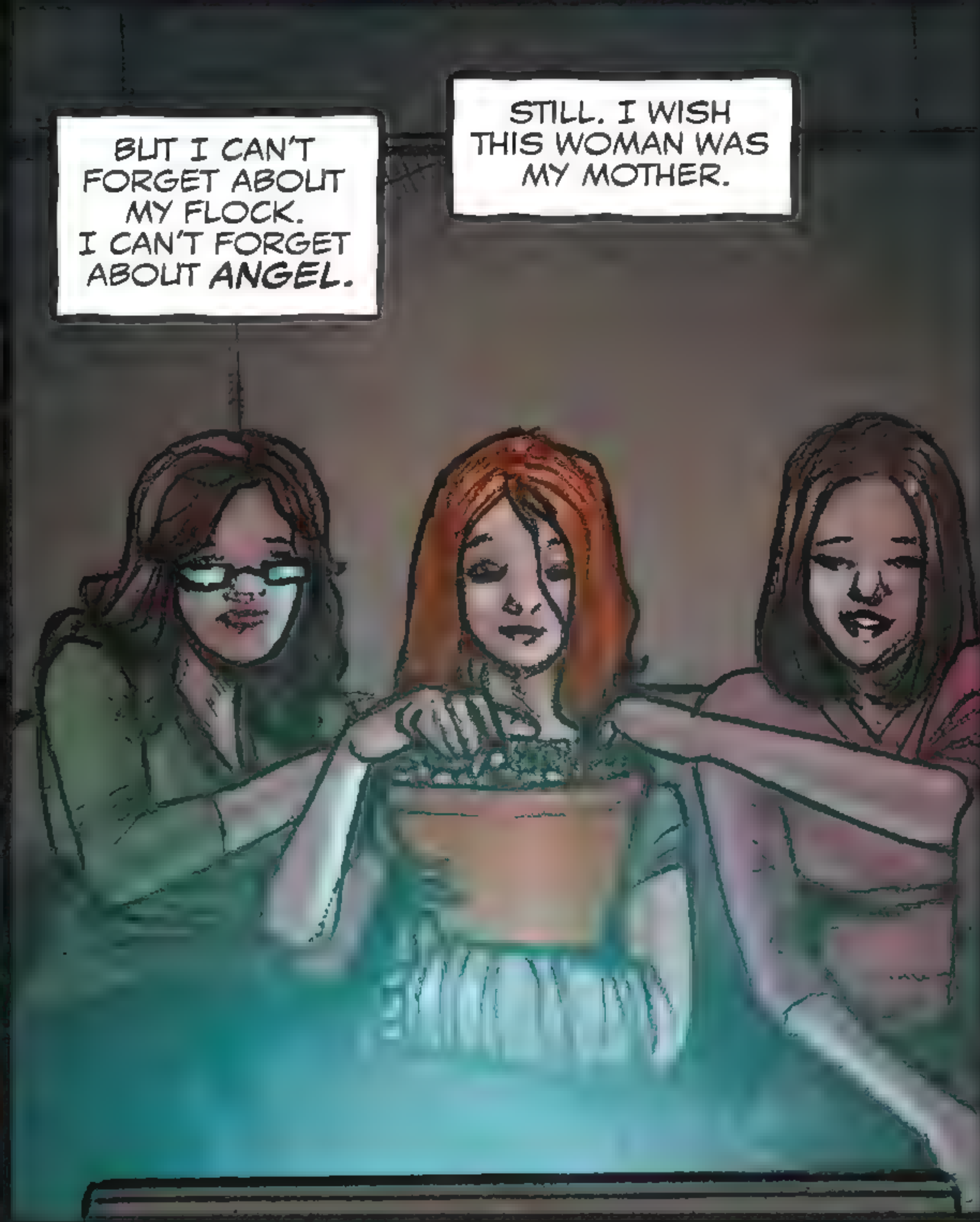
MY FRIENDS ARE WAITING. **ANGEL** IS WAITING.



BUT I FEEL SO SAFE HERE.

A MOTHER TO FEED ME, BAKE ME COOKIES.

IT'S SO FAMILIAR. I CAN ALMOST **FORGET** ABOUT THE SCHOOL.



BUT I CAN'T FORGET ABOUT MY FLOCK. I CAN'T FORGET ABOUT **ANGEL**.

STILL. I WISH THIS WOMAN WAS MY MOTHER.

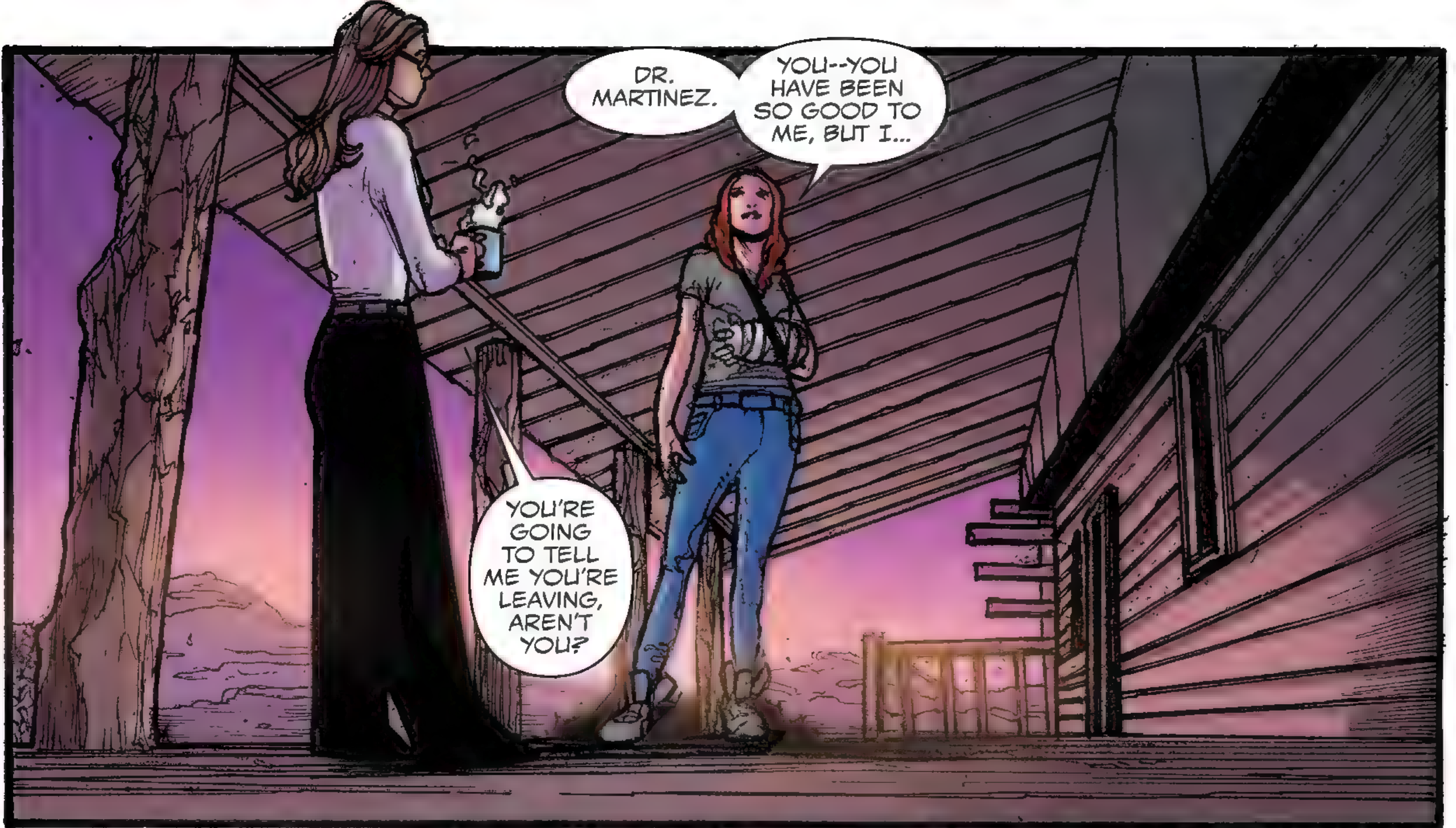


BUT SHE'S **NOT**.

AND IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT THIS.

IT'S THAT I **CAN'T** WANT THIS.

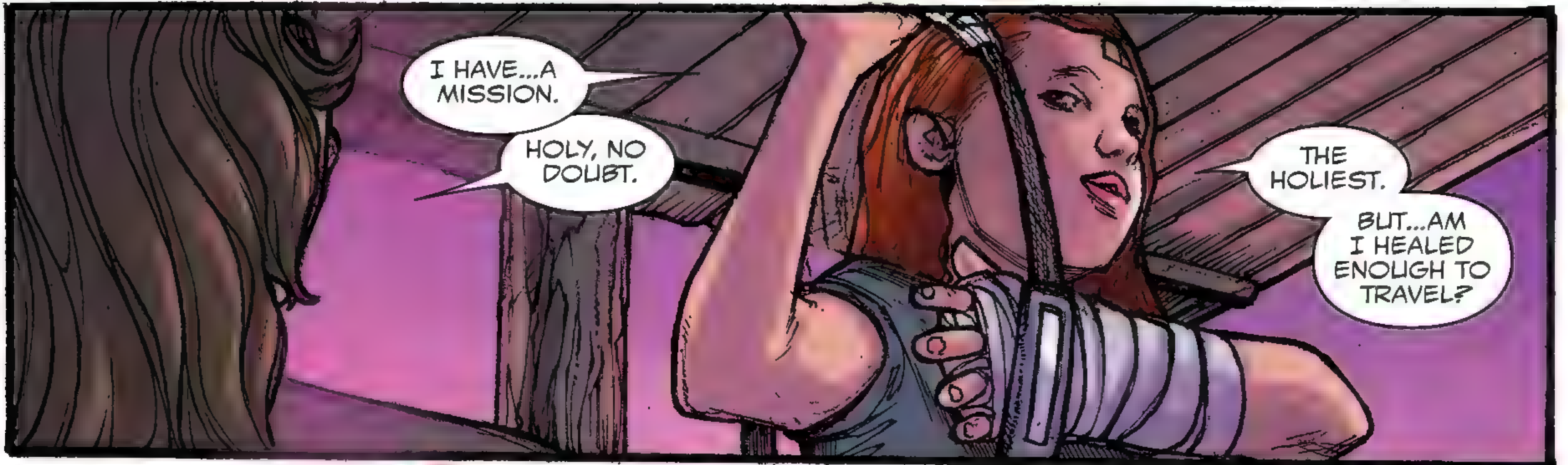
MY FLOCK NEEDS ME. **ANGEL**... NEEDS ME.



DR.
MARTINEZ.

YOU--YOU
HAVE BEEN
SO GOOD TO
ME, BUT I...

YOU'RE
GOING
TO TELL
ME YOU'RE
LEAVING,
AREN'T
YOU?

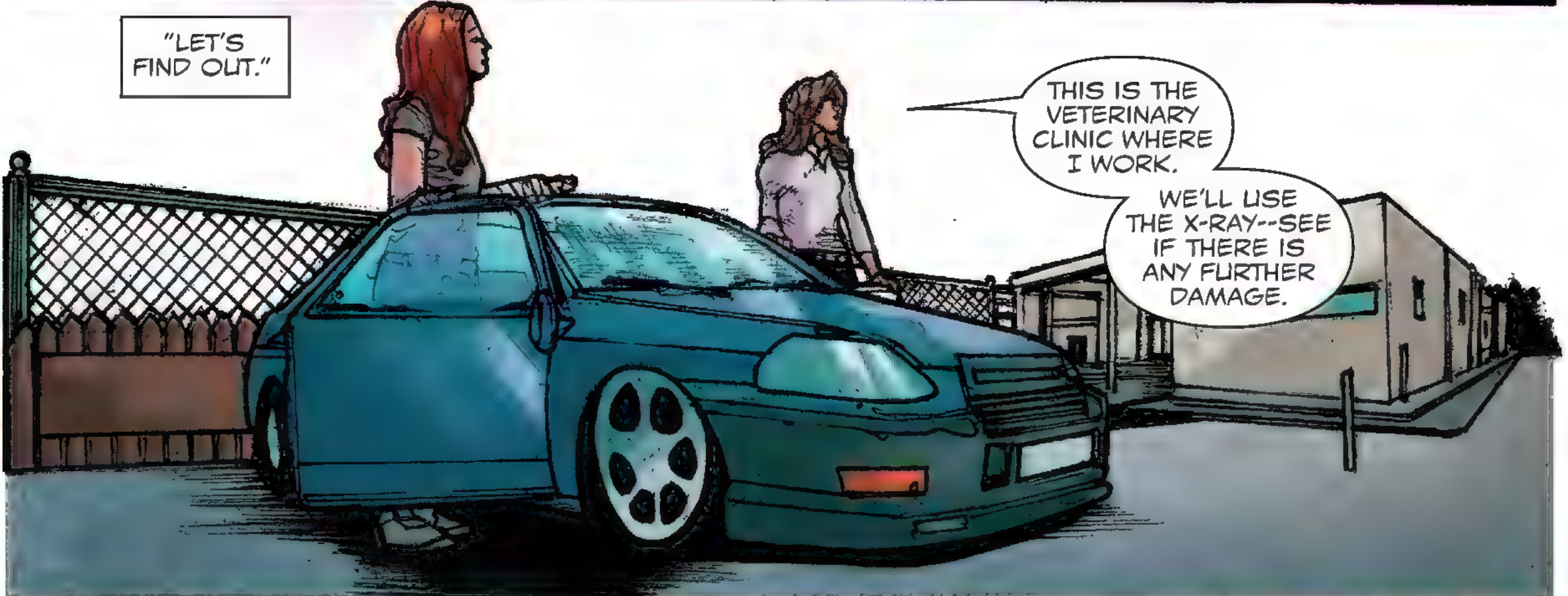


I HAVE...A
MISSION.

HOLY, NO
DOUBT.

THE
HOLDEST.

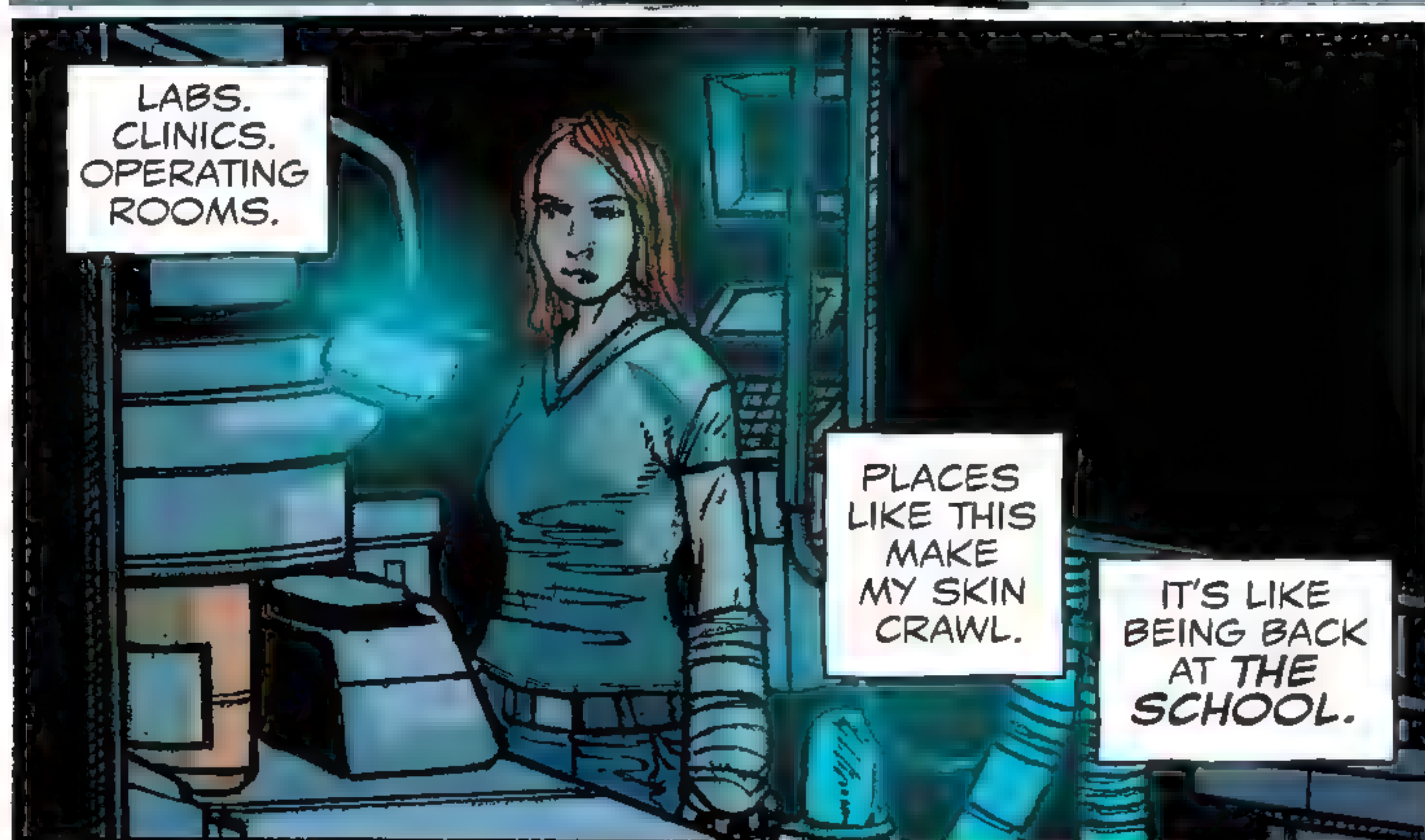
BUT...AM
I HEALED
ENOUGH TO
TRAVEL?



"LET'S
FIND OUT."

THIS IS THE
VETERINARY
CLINIC WHERE
I WORK.

WE'LL USE
THE X-RAY--SEE
IF THERE IS
ANY FURTHER
DAMAGE.



LABS.
CLINICS.
OPERATING
ROOMS.

PLACES
LIKE THIS
MAKE
MY SKIN
CRAWL.

IT'S LIKE
BEING BACK
AT THE
SCHOOL.



THE TISSUE
LOOKS AS IF
IT HAS MENDED...
NO BROKEN--
WHAT IS
THIS?

AE1THORACIC 1
FULL BODY SUPINE
PHYS: MARTINEZ

Anomaly

Foreign body
detected.

Anomaly

Foreign body
detected.

Anomaly

Foreign body
detected.

IT'S...A
COMPUTER
CHIP.

EX: Ae1thoracic 1
SE: 1/3
IM: 2/1
Full body
Phys: Martinez
T/O/ACQ: 09:17:26

A TRACKER!
THE ERASERS
PROBABLY
KNOW RIGHT
WHERE I AM.
I'VE PUT
ELLA AND DR.
MARTINEZ
IN DANGER.

I WAS
AN IDIOT
TO COME
HERE, I WAS
AN IDIOT TO
LET DOWN
MY GUARD...
TO EVEN
PRETEND--

I'VE
GOT TO
GET TO
ANGEL--

I
NEED TO
GO.

WAIT!

TAKE SOME
FOOD AND MEDICAL
SUPPLIES FOR YOUR
JOURNEY.

AND HERE'S
OUR NUMBER,
IF YOU NEED
HELP.

PEOPLE.

PEOPLE ARE
DANGEROUS.

REGULAR, ORDINARY,
EVERYDAY PEOPLE.

NOT BECAUSE
THEY TRY TO
HURT YOU...

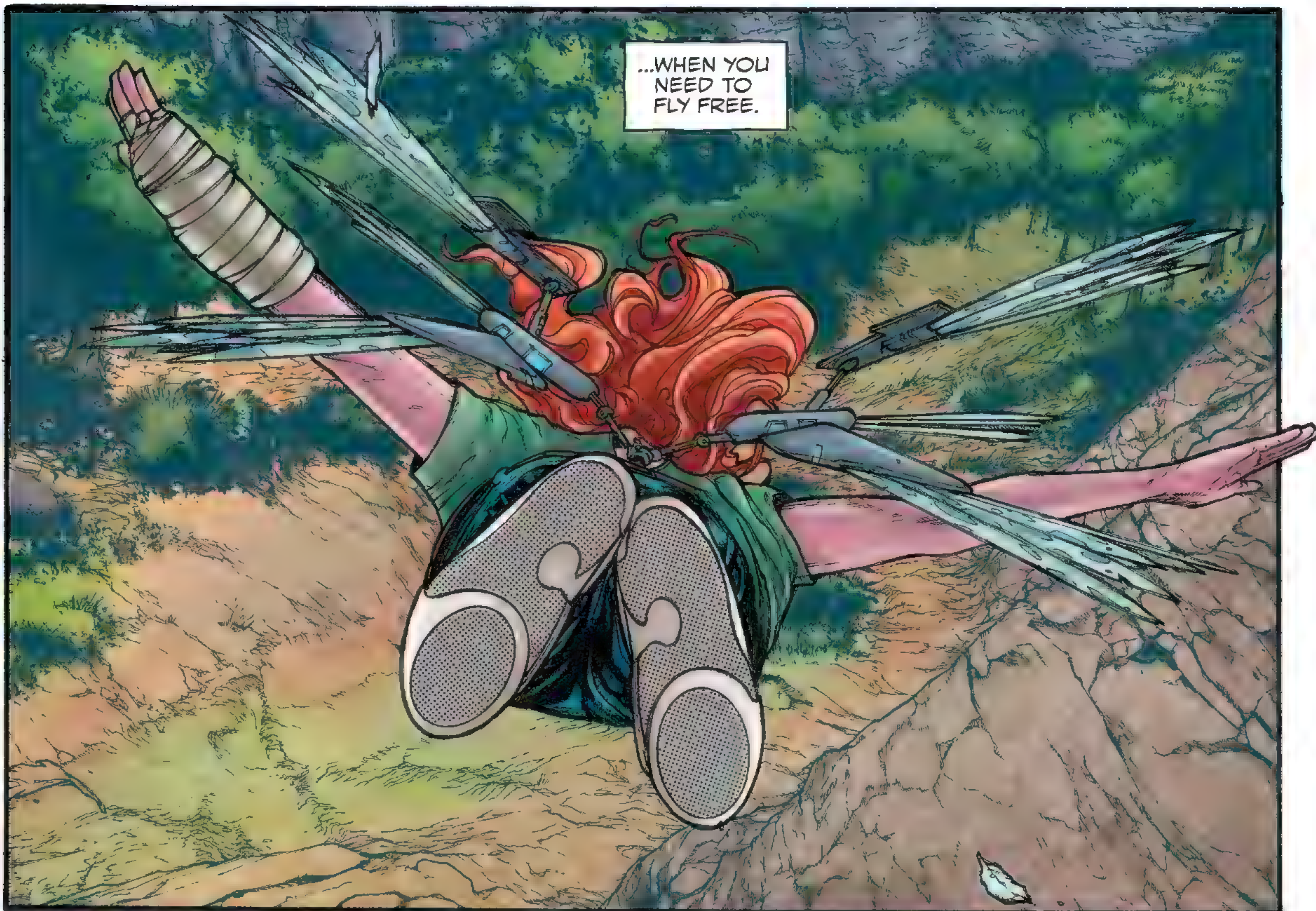
SAY
GOODBYE
TO ELLA FOR
ME.

OF
COURSE.

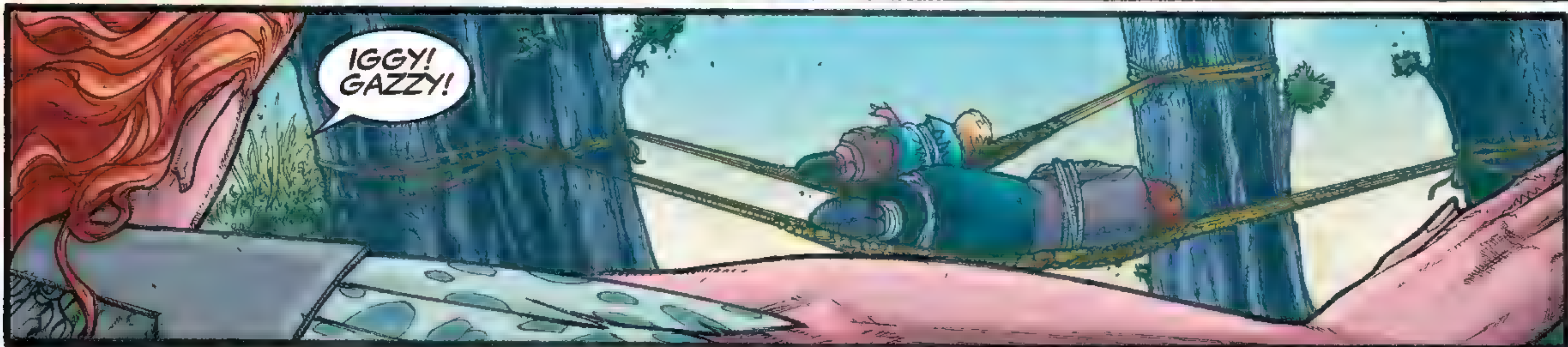
BE SAFE,
SWEETHEART.

BUT BECAUSE
YOU **MISS**
THEM WHEN
THEY'RE GONE.

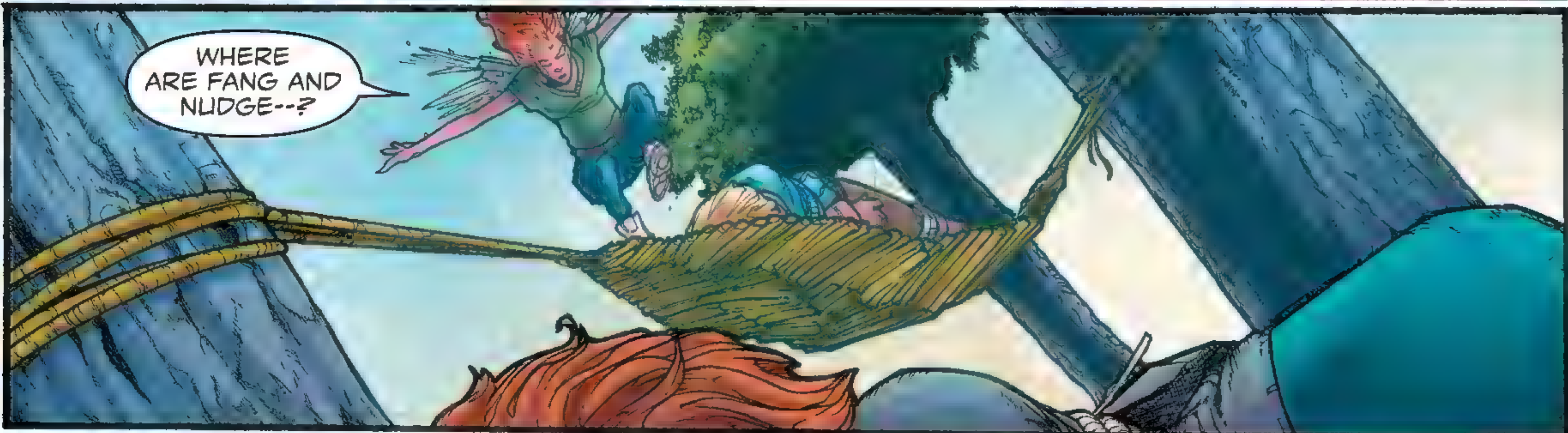
THEY
MAKE YOU
WANT TO
FOLD YOUR
WINGS...



...WHEN YOU
NEED TO
FLY FREE.



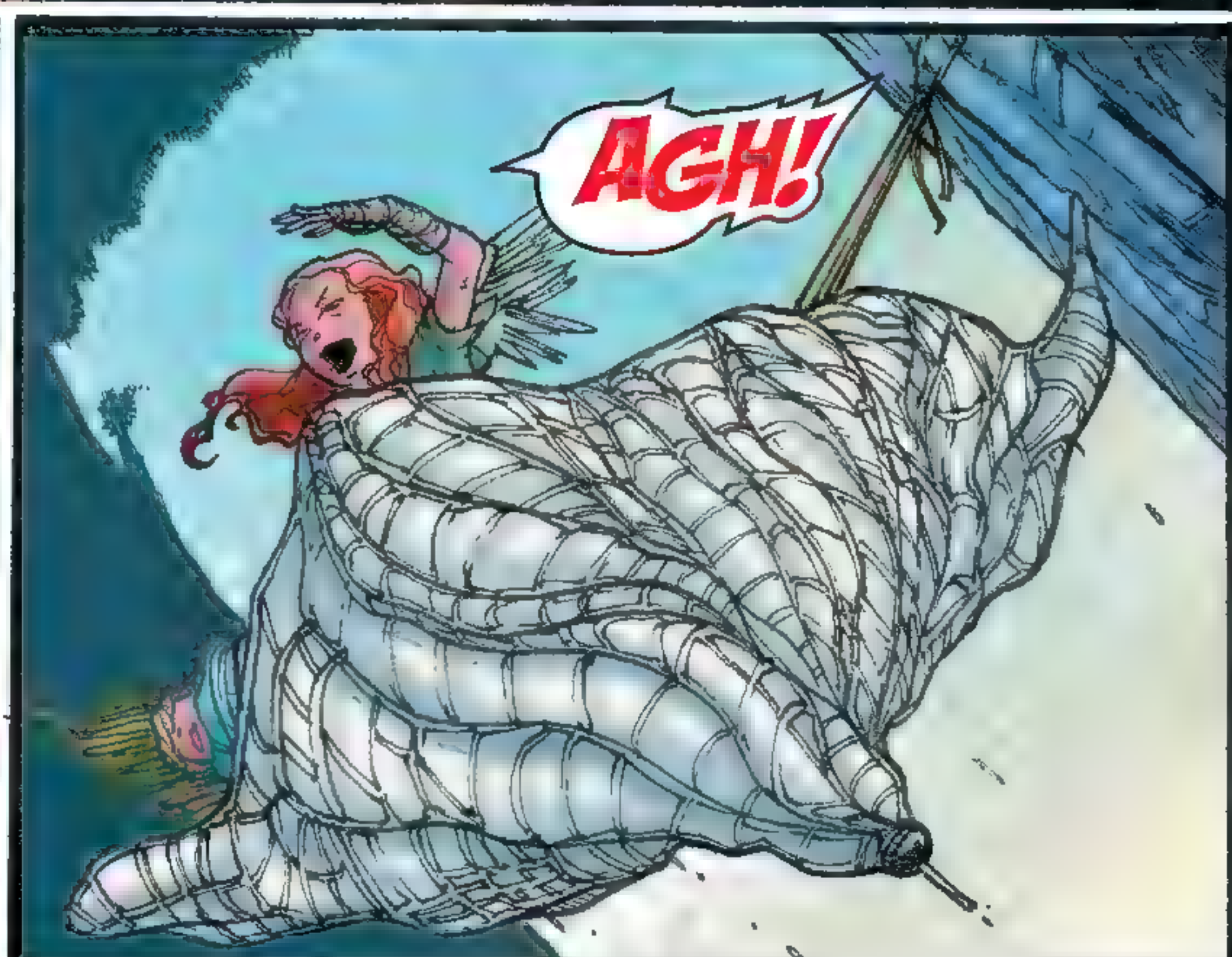
IGGY!
GAZZY!



WHERE
ARE FANG AND
NLUDGE--?



IGGY!
MMPH
MMPH!



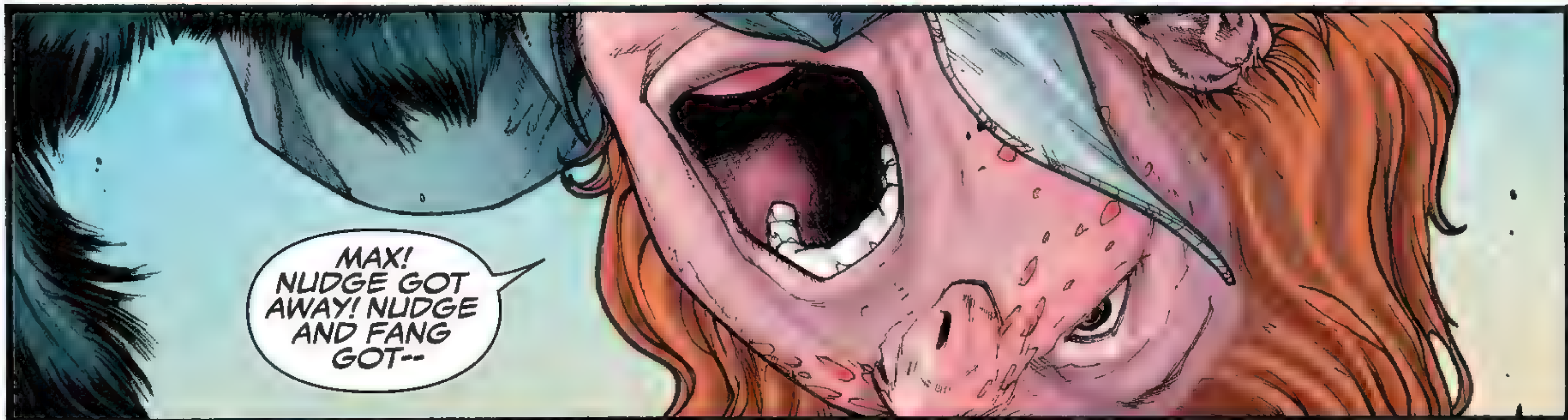
AGH!



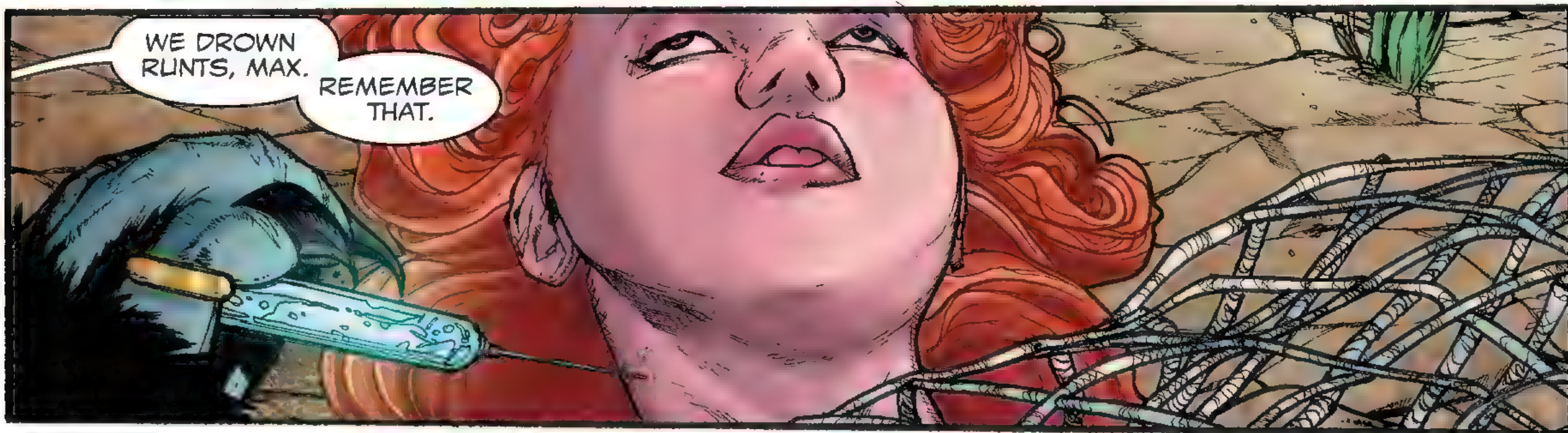
THOUGHT
YOU WHELPS
WERE THE ONLY
ONES WHO COULD
SET A TRAP,
MAXIMUM?



THOUGHT
YOU WERE
THE PICK OF
THE FREAKING
LITTER?!



MAX!
NUDGE GOT
AWAY! NUDGE
AND FANG
GOT--



WE DROWN
RUNTS, MAX.

REMEMBER
THAT.

H-HELLO...?

IS
ANYONE--?

NO!

NO
NO NO
NO!

NOT HERE--
NOT THE
SCHOOL--

IGGY!
GAZZY!
NO--

CALM DOWN,
MAXIMILM.



...JEB?!

OH,
MAXIMUM
RIDE.

I'VE
MISSED
YOU SO
MUCH.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Issue #3



